

# The IAAOR Position on the Importance of Lobbying

The Illinois Alliance for Animal Owners Rights takes the position that to effectively protect your rights and freedoms to animal health care we must remain vigilant and prepared to oppose legislative remedies which unilaterally restrict or remove those rights. We believe that certain rights and freedoms are by nature inalienable and therefore not open to subjugation by man's law. One of these inalienable rights is the right to choose optimal health care for ourselves, our children and for our animals.



Today we see an enormous outcropping of Freedom of Health Care organizations and lobbying groups across the nation who are disappointed with the cost and effectiveness of mainstream medicine for people. The Iowa Health Freedom Coalition, the Oklahoma Health Freedom Network, the National Health Freedom Coalition, the California Health Freedom Coalition, the Florida Health Freedom Action, the Georgia Complementary & Alternative Medicine Association, the New Jersey Natural Health Coalition, the New York Natural Health Project, the Coalition for Natural Health, the Minnesota Natural Health Coalition and the Health Freedom Massachusetts were all formed for this very reason. Such states as California and Oklahoma have already passed laws legalizing the use of alternative health care practitioners for their citizens.

By extension, the IAAOR believes that no laws should be passed (or allowed to remain in place) which act to restrict or remove our rights as animal owners to pursue the best animal health care options for our companion animals and livestock. We maintain that the effort to re-classify alternative, holistic practices and owner remedies under the umbrella of 'the practice of veterinary medicine' and the reclassification of traditional animal health care services such as farriery and dentistry as veterinary medicine is in fact an effort, not to protect our animals, but rather to protect the pocketbooks of veterinarian associations.

Many of you know Linda Tellington-Jones through her very popular 'Ttouch' and 'Tteam' series for horses and other animals. We have asked her to provide us with a comment for this article. She says:

*"To all animal health-care practitioners and folks who love their animals: it is time we rallied together to raise awareness of the current threat of limitation of our freedom of choice for the care of our animals. Relatively few people seem to realize that laws are being passed through many state legislatures that make it illegal for a farrier or equine dentist or massage therapist or any practitioner of complementary health-care to work without the recommendation of a veterinarian. Your phone call can make a difference. Pick up the phone now and call your state representative."*

The IAAOR understands that the art of politics is compromise. In order to affect compromise, we must become an integral part of the process, not a bystander. We must make our organization known to the Illinois state legislature as one with a consistent and verifiable mission and policy so that we may better represent the many

animal owners of the state. The establishment of political recognition requires that we not only become politically savvy, but that we also develop a strategy to keep abreast of day-to-day happenings at the state house. But because so much goes on during a legislative term, we need a filter in place to distill the information and to track and highlight what is important to our mission.

*"As a lobbyist and President of the Florida Alliance for Animal Owners Rights, I want to applaud IAAOR's efforts on behalf of our animals. I also want to congratulate them for their commitment to working through our political system to achieve their goals. The only way to make a difference for our animals is through revising laws and educating legislators, policy makers, and the public."*

*Nancy Stephens, President, Florida Alliance for Animal Owners Rights*

In light of this overarching requirement to remain 'in the legislative loop' it may be necessary for our membership to consider routinely financing an independent professional lobbying group to function as a legislative watchdog for changes relating to animal health care, veterinarian practice legislation and animal ownership. In this way the IAAOR can effectively respond to 'heads-up' legislative issues which may require immediate and extensive response.

You may view our website [www.IAAOR.org](http://www.IAAOR.org) to read our mission statement, visit our news page, browse documentation on these issues, find a practitioner in your area or learn how to join IAAOR. Also, you may contact the Illinois Alliance for Animal Owners Rights, Inc. in writing at P.O. Box 185, Mahomet, IL 61853 or simply email [info@iaaor.org](mailto:info@iaaor.org) The IAAOR membership is comprised of owners and practitioners from all areas of the state of Illinois.

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